

TRANSITION PLAN DECISION NUMBER ONE: CAREER INFORMATION

Section 118 of Perkins III was not funded for FY99, therefore the NOICC/SOICC network will continue through June 30, 2000. This means the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board and the Governor will not be designating an entity for Occupational and Employment Information this year. The following information was prepared for the WTECB's March 18 meeting. WTECB was informed of the non-funding of Section 118 by the U.S. Department of Education during its meeting.

To assure that each state provides necessary career information services, Perkins III **requires WTECB and the Governor to jointly designate an entity for Occupational and Employment Information.** Funds must be used:

- 1. To provide support for a career guidance and academic counseling program designed to promote improved career and education decision making by individuals (especially in areas of career information delivery and use).*
- 2. To make available to students, parents, teachers, administrators, and counselors, and to improve accessibility with respect to information and planning resources that relate educational preparation to career goals and expectations.*
- 3. To equip teachers, administrators, and counselors with the knowledge and skills needed to assist students and parents with career exploration, educational opportunities, and education financing.*
- 4. To assist appropriate state entities in tailoring career-related educational resources and training for use by such entities.*
- 5. To improve coordination and communication among administrators and planners of programs authorized by this Act and by section 15 of the Wagner-Peyser Act at the federal, state, and local levels to ensure nonduplication of efforts and the appropriate use of shared information and data.*
- 6. To provide on-going means for customers, such as students and parents, to provide comments and feedback on products and services and to update resources, as appropriate, to better meet customer requirements.*

Background

Career and employment information continues to be a strong need at all levels. From vocational education instructors and counselors to planning and policy developers, such information is used to guide students and programs.

Perkins II required the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) to establish a National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (NOICC) and each state to develop a State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (SOICC). This federal/state network was to implement an occupational supply and demand information system to meet the career guidance and counseling needs of vocational education programs and employment and training programs at the federal, state, and local levels. (See Appendix, beginning on page 4.)

No mention of these national or state committees is made in Perkins III. However, USDE is to name a “federal entity” to carry out employment information responsibilities. States will receive separate funding outside of the Perkins basic grant to carry out the occupational employment information functions listed above.

WTECB staff recommend the following values to guide the decision for the “new entity” for Washington occupational and employment information:

- Information is accurate, current, and accessible through the Internet.
- Information is consistent and cooperation exists among and between current information providers.
- Data collection does not duplicate other efforts and products can be clearly understood.
- Delivery of key information is not fragmented.

DECISION OPTIONS

What is the best option for addressing the occupational and employment information requirements in Perkins III?

1. Designate the SOICC, in its current location, with current agenda as the new state entity.
 - Pros: Close connection to Labor Market and Economic Analysis (LMEA) exists.
Easiest to accomplish with the least amount of disruption.
Committee provides inter-agency oversight for its activities.
 - Cons: Maintains another coordinating body.
Has no secondary education member.
Hard to measure results.
Committee membership is at the policy level, but users are technical.
Not primary sources of LMI in public schools.
Distinction between LMEA and SOICC staff roles is unclear.
2. Identify WTECB as the new entity and maintain the Committee function.
 - Pros: WTECB has many of the same members as the SOICC plus key additional state representatives and customers.
Eliminates some administrative duplication.

Promotes consistency with the Unified Plan.

Enhances oversight of this activity.

Cons: Creates additional responsibilities for WTECB.

LMEA source data is located at ES.

Maintains a coordinating board with policy focused membership.

May result in duplication of activities with LMEA.

3. Identify WTECB as the new entity and have it contract for statewide service.

Pros: Holds contractor(s) accountable to meet values of coordination, consistency, and non-duplication.

WTECB can provide continuity among contractors.

Links work directly with Unified Plan.

Clearly places role of policy and planning with WTECB and service delivery with contractor(s)

Cons: Adds responsibilities for WTECB.

APPENDIX

1. NOICC/SOICC_(National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee/State Occupational Information Coordinating Committees)

Together the NOICC and the SOICCs have used resources to develop and deliver occupational, labor market, and career information collected from federal and state agencies and to train users of the information.¹ They have operated under the authority of the U.S. Departments of Labor and Education, historically with funds from DOL. For FY 99 and beyond, Perkins III requires each state to name their “new state entity” to operate with funds from USDE.

NOICC is a federal interagency coordinating committee, established by Congress in 1976. It provides an infrastructure through which vocational education and employment and training program managers and policy makers can address occupational, labor market, and career information needs of youth and adults. Statutory members are representatives of ten federal agencies within the U.S. Departments of Labor, Education, Commerce, Defense, and Agriculture. NOICC works with SOICCs, whose statutory members represent state producers and users of occupational, educational, and labor market information.

Currently, Washington State’s SOICC is administratively located within the Employment Security Department. Its annual funding is \$120,000 for administration, distribution of materials, and supplies. Statutory members are:

- Commissioner of Employment Security, Chair.
- Deputy Commissioner of Employment Security (representing the State Job Training Coordinating Council).
- Executive Director of Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board.
- Executive Director of State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.
- Director of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DSHS).
- Director of Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development.

A staff group called the TAG (Technical Advisory Group) includes representatives from the above agencies, plus representatives from the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Higher Education Coordinating Board.

2. CIDS/WOIS (Career Information Delivery Systems/Washington Occupational Information System)

For 20 years the NOICC/SOICC network helped vocational education and employment and training programs identify the needs of the economy with national level occupational projections. In 1994, an initiative to produce and deliver state level occupational

¹ The Center for Learning Connections located at Highline Community College has been awarded the grant (\$369,000) to serve as the NOICC Training Support Center and the administrator of the \$400,000 revolving fund for materials.

supply/demand information focused on high school career and employment counseling, job placement, educational planning, and vocational and career education programs led NOICC to offer states the opportunity to create Career Information Development Systems (CIDS) through competitive bids.

Washington State's SOICC received a grant and, in cooperation with the Employment Security Department and The Evergreen State College, selected the Washington Occupational Information System (WOIS) as the state's CIDS. WOIS is a private non-profit organization that develops and delivers materials, services, and support packages at a cost of up to \$1800 per site/per year.

In 50 percent of the states, CIDS (our WOIS) is administratively connected to the SOICC. In 24 percent of the states, it is connected to their Department of Education or to a university doing labor market research, and in fewer than 8 percent, it is connected to the Employment Security Department or is an independent private non-profit organization.

3. WILMA (Washington Interactive Labor Management Access)

In 1996, the SOICC, with the assistance of the LMEA (Labor Market and Economic Analysis Branch of Employment Security), conducted an evaluation of customer satisfaction of labor market information in Washington State. The report contained the following major themes for improvement:

- Greater availability—expand access to information.
- Increased interest—improve marketing.
- Understandability—more “user friendly.”
- Multi-faceted delivery—different formats.
- Skills information sought—more information about occupations and skills.
- Local and regional information—need information at different levels.
- Training—training on how to find and use.
- Improved coordination—sharing data among agencies.
- New and emerging occupations—keep system current.
- Accurate and dependable—must be reliable.

This evaluation formed the foundation for the development of Washington Interactive Labor Management Access (WILMA) in 1997. WILMA is designed for students, adults, and already employable job seekers. It is designed for high school, postsecondary, and baccalaureate level graduates. It is an Employment Security product based on LMEA information provided by Employment Security and census data. It is available for free over the Internet or on CDs.

ORCA

The Washington SOICC has adapted for Washington's use a student-focused application of WILMA that is available to schools for free via the Internet or on CDs.

